The beſt and worſt of Paul, and his character in both conditions.

2 Cor. 12. 1. to ver. 11.

It is not expedient for me doubtleſſe to glorie, I will come to viſions and revelations of the Lord, &c.

IT is worthy of conſideration for your incouragement, to be frequent in your *addreſſes unto God*, that when a man comes from heaven, having had immediate converſe with Jeſus Chriſt, as *great things* are ordinarily communicated *to him* there: ſo *great things* may be exſpected *from him*. As *Iohn* being *upon the Lords day in the ſpirit*, Rev. 1. 10. (which was a degree of heaven) that is, being poſſeſſed of the ſpirit, and acted by it, you could ſee little from him, but what ſavoured of the *ſpirit*. Then had he thoſe clear *Viſions* in the *Revelation* concerning the ſtate of the Chriſtian Church, and the ruine of her numerous and potent adverſaries, which is moſt heavenly *Aqua vitæ* to chear her *drooping ſpirits* in her *wilderneſſe*-condition. *Preface.*

And in Acts 4. 13. when the Jewiſh high Commiſſion, who had convented the Apoſtles *Peter and Iohn*, *ſaw their boldneſſe, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had bin with Ieſus.* It was viſible that Jeſus had left ſomthing upon them extraordinary. No man ever came near to him, but he went away *better from him*. He delights to dart down Divine irradiations into ther minds, and to leave ſome heavenly tincture upon the ſpirits of his Saints.

Hence it is, that they who ſpend much time in ſecret commu- *Note.*

nion with God, know most of his mind, and are best able to open the cabinet-counsels of Heaven, and to reveal the deep mysteries of the Gospell to others in publick.

This was likewise *Pauls advantage*, whom you find in this Chapter in varietie of postures, one while you hear of his being *caught up into heaven*; soon after you find him at the *next door to hell*, being under such a black temptation of the devil, and his messenger. *Here you have the best and the worst of him.*

1. Paul in an high pitch of communion with God, which he discovers most modestly, by way of self-vindication from the false cavils of others, *ver.* 1.2.3.4.5.6.

2. Paul under the tyrannie of the messenger of Satan, *ver.* 7.

3. His ardent importunate addresse unto God by prayer. *ver.* 8.

4. Gods gracious return by way of answer, *ver.* 9.

5. Result thereof, Pauls humble posture, and most self-denying resolution, *ver.* 10.

Vers. 1. *It is not expedient for me doubtlesse to glorie, I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.*

You have here a singular copie, (and I doubt, we finde it unimitable, in regard of our weaknesse) which the blessed Apostle Paul sets us, when God himself came in competition, he *passes by*, and *over-looks himself*, and desires rather to *advance God*, and to *magnifie Christ*; *It is not expedient for me doubtlesse to glorie*; he had to do with false Apostles, and they sought to disparage him, to cloud him, and eclipse his glorie, yet he would not endeavour so much to withdraw the curtain, and to remove that cloud from himself, as he will employ his all, that the *Sun of righteousnesse* may appear in his most glorious lustre. a *It is not expedient for me doubtlesse to glorie, He come to visions and revelations of the Lord*:

a Saluberrimum animo ñ τῆς εἰσπνοῆς συσταλή, Grot. Doct.

A man who is acquainted with the teachings of the great Doctor of the chair that sits in heaven, hath learned to prefer God before himself; to advance Gods glorie rather then his own.

Species objectæ vigilanti aut somnianti. Grot. b ἀποκαλύψεις quæ citra ex tasin fiunt. Piscat. ἔκστασις, quæ fiunt per extasin. Piscat. Afflatus Dei, qui mentem perfundit. Grot.

Most men would serve themselves before they serve God; Paul saith here, stand thou by thy *self*, it is not expedient for me to glory, but I have had indeed *visions and revelations of the Lord*, of them I will glorie: here you have *visions* b *revelations*

such

ſuch diſcoveries as are preſented to the eye of men either waking or ſleeping, (as it were) *bodily repreſentations*, and *revelations*, which ſome make to be more ſublime and *Seraphicall diſcoveries*, Ile come to *viſions* (ſaith he) ſuch things as are obvious to ſenſes; yea, Ile come to *revelations* of the moſt heavenly ſecrets, ſuch as I could never had known, unleſſe I had been wrapped up to heaven: and the reaſon why a man thus taught of God, will preferre his glorie before his own, is

Becauſe this is indeed the *eſſentiall* and *grand work of converſion*, and the *infallible ſign of grace* in the heart, to depoſe *ſelf*, and to ſet up *God upon his throne*: therefore as by Adams fall, we threw off the *image of God*, and ſet up carnall *ſelf-love*, when the ſecond Adam comes to rule in the heart, then we do diſplace carnall ſelf-love, and again reſtore *God* unto his *crown and dignitie*; this is the character of a Saint, of a Diſciple, ſaith Chriſt in *Luke* 14. 26. *If any man hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and his own life for my ſake, he cannot be my Diſciple.* He muſt love Jeſus Chriſt better then the *world*, yea better then *himſelf*, and accordingly he hath an *inſtinct* within him, that will incline him to preferre *Chriſt* above *himſelf*. *Reaſ.* Rom. 1. 12.

A ſhort hint onely by way of Uſe.

Conſult with your own *tempers*, feel the *pulſe of your own ſpirits*; ſo much *grace* you have, or ſo much *progreſſe in grace* you have made, and not one degree, not one grain more, as you have learned to *advance God*, to lift *up Ieſus Chriſt above your ſelves*, and all your own *intereſts* and *ends*, when once they enter a conteſt with their *Soveraign Lord* the King of heaven. *Uſe.*

I knew a man in Chriſt above fourteen years ago. *Verſ. 2.*

A man in Chriſt, doubtleſſe *one* being in Chriſt having *union and communion* with him, and ſo referres to the ſubject being in Chriſt, rather then to the object. I knew *a man in Chriſt*, having ſuch and ſuch revelations; *I knew a man in Chriſt above fourteen years ago.* All Expoſitours agree not whether theſe *fourteen years ago* have reference to *Pauls converſion*, or to the time of this *revelation* that Paul had; probably, both may be reconciled in one; above fourteen years ago, ſo long it was at leaſt ſince Paul was converted, ſoon after he was converted, he might be *wrapped up*, and have this revelation; and ſo it may have reference unto *both*.

I knew a man, why doth not Paul ſay, *I Paul*, ſeeing he was

the person certainly; yet he speaks of himself. Hence observe

Doct. *They who know most of God, are most modest when they come to speak of themselves.*

What said Job? in the 42. Job 5, 6. I heard of God, great things have been spoken of him now, in the later Chapters, immediately before of wonderfull discoveries made, *but now my eye seeth thee*, therefore *I abhorre my self in dust and ashes*; here is the temper of a Saint, and why will he be thus modest? good Reason.

Reas. 1. He well knows that Pride is a cursed weed, most opposite to God; and his glory; for we do by *pride* most *immediately contest with God*; God will have the crown upon *his head*; Pride saith, the crown must be upon *mine*: God saith, I will have my will; Pride saith, I will *have mine*: Now a Saint that is acquainted with the rules and laws of *self-humiliation*, learns to abhor this pride, for it is so opposite to God, it is said therefore, God is most opposite *to pride*, in the 1. *Peter* 5. 5. *The Lord resisteth the proud*, he doth *lead* forth an *army* (as it were) *march* forth in the head of an Army against proud persons; they are so directly opposing him. But then secondly,

ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται.

Reas. 2. Pride is most opposite to the *life of Faith* which is the *Gospel of life*; Faith is the Gospel-grace; you shall see this in the 2. *Hab.* 3, 4. a most excellent place, that will shew you what an opposition there is betwixt *Pride*, and betwixt *Faith*: The *Vision is yet for an appointed time, but in the end, it shall speak and not ly, though it tarry wait for it, because it will surely come it will not tarry.* Now Pride saith, I will not *stay Gods leasure*, I have staid a great while and I will wait no longer: what is this? *Behold* (in the 4. verse) *his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith.* A proud soul that is not upright, but the just, (the e is the opposition) he shall live by his faith, that will be content humbly to wait upon God, and say, *Lord, thy time is best*, I will stay thy *leasure*, I have no will of my own, no end of my own, I will be at thy disposing come when thou pleasest, I know thy word will be made good: Now an humble Saint knowing this, that Pride is so opposite, he will speak modestly: and there are two Cases, wherein he learns to be very modest, so far as he acts his Saintship.

c 2. King. 6. 33.

1 *Case.* When he comes to speak of himself, there he *watches over himself*, for Pride and Vain-glory would step in, and a man would

speak

speak of himself; it may be tell *stories of Gods providence*, but the close shall be wound up with *something of self*; God hath shewn those and those great mercies to me, and it is not so much to set *up God*, as to set up my *self*; this is the temper of a carnall heart.

When he comes to reprove others he is very modest who knows much of God, he will not do it out of passion, but with compassion, *shewing all meekness to men.* Tit. 3. 2. 2. *Case.*

O therefore, let us every day at the throne of grace put in *Caveats against pride*, and let us preserve a godly *vigilancy over our selves*, against Pride which is the most *naturall weed* to our corrupt spirits, and springs up most *plentifully* in the soyl of our carnall hearts, let us watch against it; Gods dear servants have been overtaken with it: Jonah though a holy man of God for the main, yet sometimes he discovers himself to be both a *proud and pettish Prophet*; the Lord will send him of a message, and to preach this Doctrine, *Yet forty dayes, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* He thought that God would not be so gracious to them, therefore he runs away, and when he saw that the Lord was gracious, (not knowing what an *intention* God had, the holy *reservation* he had, not being expressed,) *yet forty dayes and Nineveh shall be overthrown*, unless they do repent: for God is not bound, neither doth he always reveal every part of his will; what he saith is true, yet he doth not always speak out; When Jonah saw that the people of *Nineveh* did convert to God, at least *externally humble* themselves in sackcloth and ashes, and were like to obtain mercy, at least a *reprievement*, *as to the execution of the judgement*, Jonah preferred his *credit*, before the *word of God*, that he was rather angry that his own *word* was not made good; then God should shew mercy to a *whole city*; what a pettish disposition here was; you and I are of the same constitution, the Lord make us more circumspect in *maintaining a guard about our hearts.* 1. *Use.* Jon. 3. 4. vers. 7, 8. Prov. 4. 23.

There is good reason therefore, why Paul should advise (pray take notice of it) in the 1. Tim. 3. that a Bishop he would have, he must be blameless, in the 2d. verse, *&c.* but in the 6. verse, *not a Novice*: not one that is newly sprung up, a young plant, newly converted to the Faith, newly planted (as it were) *in Christ*; why? lest being lifted up with Pride; lifted up with Pride; why so? *Of all generations of people in the world, there is none more* νεόφυτον.

apt to be proud then young Converts: O they will preſently deſpiſe others, if they be not as *high* as themſelves, and come on as far as they are, and *up* to *their principles*; and if you adde this further, A young Convert, and a *young Miniſter, eſpecially if he be well gifted, is more apt to be proud*: I ſpeak it not ſo much to *diſparage* thoſe, as to *engage* them to Vigilancy over their own hearts: not a Novice, leſt he ſhould be proud, in that he is a *Miniſter*; O he hath gifts, though a *young man, yet able to teach a whole Congregation*, to come off it may be with applauſe, here he *ſwells*, here he *admires himſelf*, and falls into the *condemnation of the Devil*; it ſeems that was Pride, and that judgement that he fell into was for Pride, that was the Devils ſin, *The Devil would equalize himſelf with God*, is *Peter Lombards expreſſion*: and they who underſtand the *Originall*, will finde that there is ſomething different from what is (I humbly conceive) ordinarily comprehended in the 6. verſe of the Epiſtle of Jude, *And the Angels which kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation*; But left their own habitation; here is the ſin ſtill of the Angels, what was this? they would not be *contented to ſtay in that place where God ſet them, nor to keep their ſtation: kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation:* both the expreſſions make fully up the ſin of the Angels and not the judgement; (as ſome expoſitours do conceive) they would be gadding abroad, and were more curious and inquiſitive, then God would allow them to be, and ſo you have in the 2. Peter 2.4. *For if God ſpared not the Angels that ſinned, but curſt them down to hell, but reſerved them in chains: Sinned*, there was there fault, as is expreſſed here, kept not their firſt eſtate, he hath reſerved them in chains, there is their judgement.

Diabolus voluit ſe parificâſſe Deo. Lombard.

I knew a *man in Chriſt above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knowes*, ſuch a one caught up to the third heaven, ſuch a one caught up, he was ſnatched up.

Verſe 2. ἁρπαγέντα τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ ἁρπαγέντα εἰς τὸν παράδεισον.

Sometimes God doth ſurprize his ſervants, with moſt glorious and gracious diſcoveries, he was *caught up into* Paradice, and heard unſpeakable things, if you pleaſe to compare the 4. verſe. Heaven the place where Chriſt and the bleſſed Angels, with the ſouls of Saints departed are, that his people may know his good intention towards them, they ſhall ſee and taſt Heaven before they come to enjoy it. What is the reaſon, why God doth thus ſurprize them?

Doct.

Verſe 4.

That he may ſhew all is *of free-grace*, they ſhall have ſuch

mercies as they *never asked for*; for as God sometimes is found of us, when we do seek him that he may encourage us to pray, so, sometimes he is found of us, *before we seek him*, that we may see free-grace may prevent our prayers; and he bestows not mercies onely with reference to our prayers, lest we should come to think our prayers meritorious. *Reason.* Isa. 65. 1. *Note.*

As we should blesse God for the glory of his *free-grace*, that he will surprize us, so walk in such an *humble posture*, that therein thou mayest finde God delight to come in upon thee; for free-grace never works so naturally, as upon its own *proper object*; which is, when we have the greatest *sense of our own unworthinesse*, even full of self-annihilating thoughts. We never see so *much* of God, as when we *see least in our selves*; we are never able to discover so much of the *Starres in the day* time, (as the Philosophers intimate to you) as when you are lowest, when you are in the bottom of a dark pit: *The choycest wines are the best preserved in the lowest cellars*: The most glorious discoveries are communicated, and continued to those that lie lowest in their own apprehensions. Next observation hence, is this, *Use.*

That when God is pleased most fully to discover himself unto his Saints, they are not able for the present to reach every thing in those discoveries: *Doct.*

Paul knew he was wrapped up, but by whom, the manner, whether in the body, or out of the body *I cannot tell*, saith he, *God knows*; he must appeal to God; why doth the Lord keep them in the dark thus?

Because he would *keep them humble*; and therefore you shall finde often this expression in Ezekiel, and I desire you will take notice of it, I observe not in any of the Prophets so often (if at all this expression) *Sonne of man, Sonne of man*, (saith he to Ezekiel) *come and see*, or to that purpose he calls him up to make great *discoveries* to him. why Sonne of man to Ezekiel? none of the *Prophets had more glorius Visions then Ezekiel* had, that he might keep *him humble*, when he had the *greatest discoveries*, yet he shall not understand all things in those discoveries; I do not believe Ezekiel did, nor Daniel, nor others, (and it is the judgement of 100 times more learned men) but that God *reveals his prophesies by degrees:* It was enough for the Lords purposes for the present, that Ezekiel and Daniel should have such things revealed to them, as they were to communicate to the Churches, Prophesies are fulfilled gradually D. *Jackson.*

it may be Paul also should understand more afterwards, then Ezekiel and Paul were able to apprehend for the present; they are gradually apprehended.

Use. If we are not able to reach every thing in Gods revelations, such discoveries as he makes, therefore let us not rashly, and proudly, and insolently censure others that are not able to understand every thing in Scripture, that are not able to untie all knots, to resolve all difficulties. There are some things δυσνόητα, 2. Pet. 2.16. Peter saith, there were such in Pauls Epistles: and it is a saying of that reverend and learned Mr. *Robert Bolton*, now in heaven, that lived in *Northamptonshire*, saith he, *There are some places of*
Verse 29. *Scripture, that we must be content to be ignorant of, till we come to the University of heaven*, and he reckons that in the 1. Cor. 15. being baptized for the dead: and that women should have a care how they carry themselves, because of the Angels in the 1. Cor. 11:
Verse 10. and some other places he summed up: Do not disparage, do not reject mens Ministrie, or despise their poore endeavours, because they are not able to discover every thing; Blesse God for what he makes known by them, so far as he *reveals his Sonne in them*, and to you by them; and remember the very Apostles themselves did not know every *Circumstance* in those Revelations they had.

Here Paul saith, I knevv Such a one *caught up to the third heaven*; what third heaven is that? you shall see more to clear it in the 4. verse: *And I knew such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knows*; how *he was* caught up into* *Paradise*, Paradise, what is this Paradise? the Rabbins have a conceit that there is a *Paradise*, a kind of a third place, where the souls lie asleep, and do not come to heaven, therefore they make not onely a *Hell*, but such a *Paradise*, and then *heaven*; when the body and soul comes to be after the resurrection. But there is a three fold Heaven;

*παράδεισος. Zenoph. *vivarium* παραδείσους μέστους δένδρων καὶ θηρίων. S. Scr. *hortus deliciarum; transfertur verbum ab horto Edenis loco amœnissimo, ad sedes & mansiones cœlestes significandos*; Joel 2.3. ὡς παράδεισος τρυφῆς ἡ γῆ. *Hebraicæ literæ (quod rarò fit è Græcis) hanc Græcam vocem nobilitarunt, à Græcâ Hæbraicam hanc conflando*; παράδεισος פַּרְדֵּס Cant. 4.13. Eccl. 2. 5.

1. That heaven which is called the air, ------ the *expansum* here below where the Fowls are, the Fowles are said to be in heaven.

2. There is the *Cœlum stellatum* ------ vvhere the starres are; and then

3. There is the *cœlum gloriosum*, the *sedes sanctorum beato-*

rum, where the throne of God is, and doubtleſſe *this paradiſe here is the third heaven*; for ſo he ſaid, ſuch a one caught up into the third heaven, in the ſecond verſe; therefore this paradiſe muſt be that heaven. It is a vain conceit (at leaſt from this place for ought I could yet ever learn from any other) to conceive a third place where they ſay Lazarus *his ſoul when he was dead* and was raiſed againe, was in this paradiſe; but we need not to be inquiſitive after that; *Where the Scripture hath no tongue, why ſhould we have an ear?* Here is a place that is this paradiſe, it is called the third heaven, and as Chriſt ſaid to the Thief, when he had deſired he might be in the kingdome, This day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe. The kingdome of Jeſus Chriſt is paradiſe; paradiſe the kingdome of Chriſt; why, here paradiſe is the third heaven, and therefore they are the ſame: now he was caught up into paradiſe, and heard unſpeakable words, which it is not lawfull for men to utter. Luke 23.43.

It is not lawfull, under favour of the learned Tranſlatours, may we not here rather render it thus, *no power to utter*, whence comes the word ἐξουσία, *Autheritie*; which he *had no commiſſion to utter*: ſome render it not poſſible, ſo in the Margin, ſome not lawfull; but I am ſure very learned men thus render it, which *there is no commiſſion for a man to utter*; but admit it is not poſſible to utter, they were ſuch great things, a man cannot, nay, a man alſo alwayes muſt not utter; hath no commiſſion to utter every thing that is made known unto him. But to paſſe on, οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ.

Of ſuch a one will I glory, yet *of my ſelf will I not glory*, but in mine *infirmities*; Paul take him as in himſelf, he will not glory, he is far from glorying; in *a third perſon* it may be he will *glory* of the ſame things, and in the ſame things, that he will not glory *in himſelf*; but rather act the part of an noble man indeed, and really act it, (*not hypocritically, ſuſtinendo perſonam,*) but he will debaſe himſelf to the loweſt; that is an humble poſture, the frame of an humble ſoul, and deſire to advance Chriſt to the higheſt, diſparage himſelf, conceal himſelf, ſo God may appear in his glory,

For though I would deſire to glory, I ſhall not be a fool; he had matter to glory if he would have produced it, for I will ſay the truth, he might have ſpoken a great deal of truth, when he gloried in himſelf, but he will not do it: but now I forbear, leaſt any man ſhould think of me above that which he ſees me to be,

or hearts of me; here is an *admirable fruit of humility*; I desire it may be observed, an admirable fruit of humility; and the Observation is this,

• Doct. *That he who hath a deep die of humiliation, is sometimes very carefull to conceal himself, and his own glory.* Why so? *least any man should think of me above that which he sees me to be, or hears of me*; Why is he thus carefull to conceal himself? upon this very ground, even as Jesus Christ, *Michael the Archangell*, (for he was that Michael that did contest with the Devill about Moses his body where he should be buried,) Sathan would fain have known the place, Jesus Christ would have it concealed;

Note. why? lest that he being so great an instrument of the *glory of God*, people should adore him, and sacrifice to him; he knew how *superstitiously*, how *idolatrously* those people were *enclined*, notwithstanding all the *discoveries* of God they had had, all the *glorious ordinances*, and all the providentiall administrations, it should be concealed: so doth an humble Saint well know, that he hath great reason to conceal himself; why? lest others should advance him too high. It may be there is such a man that is an humble *Minister*, if they should know that he converted *such a soul*, or that he made such a *book*, (therefore my name shall not be written to it) they would adore him too much; it may be a *charitable* person, if they should know he gave so much *money to such an use*, they would idolize him.

Therefore Ile conveigh it secretly, not pompously displaying his own good works, and I hope many *Parliament-men*, and men in great *place*, they can be content to serve God, and serve the Publick, though their name be not *printed* and ranked *in such* and such *catalogues*; here is the frame of an humble spirit: and therefore by way of Use,

Use. If you be so desirous, very desirous to discover *all of your self*, set alwayes the best side forwards, to *guild over all your actions*, with the most *specious commendations*, and cannot be content to do any thing in *secret*, but that it must be published; O suspect there is a great deal of *unmortified pride in thy heart*; thou hadst need pray to the Lord to humble thee, and pull down those proud *plumes of thine*, for if there were a deep die of humiliation, thou wouldest be content to conceal thy self, especially when the glory of God and thine come in competition; and be glad so *Gods cause were carried on though by another*. Thus Luther did re-

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courage Melancthon: God is able to raiſe his own ſinking cauſe, and though we are unworthy, it may be done by others. For *though I ſhould deſire to glory, I ſhall not be a fool, for I will ſay the truth, but now I forbear, leſt any man ſhould think of me above that which he ſees me to be, or that he heareth of me; and leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure, through the abundance of revelations*: abundance of revelations. *Potens eſt Deus ſuam labentem cauſam erigere, ſi nos digni non erimus, fias per alios.*

Somtimes you ſee the Lord gives to ſome of his ſervants abundance of revelations; not this and that revelation, but abundance of revelations: ſhall know many things, why ſo? what account can we give of the wiſdome of God in this? *Doct.*

Becauſe he doth intend (here is the reaſon) to *gain himſelf abundance of glory*, by *ſuch and ſuch perſons*, he will not make them the conduit-pipes of conveighing ſuch and ſuch *diſcoveries of himſelf unto others*; the Lord hath fitted for, and given parts, and the Spirit, and gifts, and graces, ſuitable to be a *glorious inſtrument*, and therefore he ſhall have abundance of revelations: and therefore by way of Uſe, *Reaſ.*

Let it be our care to bleſſe God, heartily bleſſe God, and this were a ſign indeed of *love to Ieſus Chriſt, and a freedome from envy*, if thou be kept in the *dark thy ſelf*, yet thou canſt bleſſe God that ſome others have an *abundance of revelations*; but here is the wretched muttering of pride in our carnall hearts, we cannot endure that any body ſhould know more then our ſelves; O this hath *broken many good Lectures*, this hath bred a great deal of *heart-burning amongſt Miniſters*, this makes (it may be) great *Counſellours and Stateſmen many times endeavour to pull down one another*; why? becauſe they grow as *trees before their windows*, and a little hinder their *proſpect*, becauſe it may be they have greater parts, and greater abilities then themſelves, and are able to ſay more, and gain *more reputation*, and do more then they: O this is not a *thankefull frame*, this is not an *humble poſture*. *Uſe.*

I but ſaith many a ſoul that would be in the higheſt forme; It may be, I have as many revelations as others, and as great diſcoveries are made to me: for anſwer to this Queſtion. *Qu.*

I beſeech you let us a little conſider, for there is much talk of *Revelations*, and I hope there are many, and a great deal of diſcourſe of new light, and I hope there is much, many more clear *diſcoveries*, and will be, (for the Pope muſt *come down by new* *An.*

light, how ever ſome men ſcoff at it) I do not mean by an addition of new fundamentalls, and by new light ſubſtantiall truths, but indeed Revelation is this properly, the ſpirit of Revelation *enabling us more fully to ſee what is already revealed, as the rule to diſcover thoſe objects* which are *propounded in the word of God*, and therefore for your ſatisfaction to theſe that ſay we have ſuch and ſuch revelations, &c. Firſt,

Note. What Revelations now to be expected.

1. Knowv that there are ſome *extraordinary Revelations*, vvhich are made to *Churches, and thoſe by publick perſons authorized by God himſelf*, and they are alwayes *infallible*; Upon this very ground, doth our Saviour ſay, in the cloſure of thoſe ſeven Epiſtles in the ſecond and third Revelations: *He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit ſaith to the Churches*: when the Spirit ſpeaks when he hath a tongue to ſpeak, we muſt hear; but then

2. 2. There are other *Revelations that are not made thus to publick perſons*, and wherein there is not alwayes that infallibility, throughout, in the whole, though ſo far as the Spirit reveals himſelf to any, he is *infallible*; but it is not ſo to them, becauſe they are not *publick perſons*, and that act by a publick *Commiſſion*; there are Revelations to *particular perſons*; now what is the diſference betwixt thoſe two? why, they are *for themſelves*, others for *the publick*, therefore they are infallibly and extraordinarily acted, and they know it ſo to be; as Paul ſaid, you ſhall finde in the 16. of the Acts, there when he was called to Macedonia, (it is a very good place for this purpoſe, and I deſire it may be conſidered,) when he had that Revelation there, that he muſt go into Macedonia; it is ſaid, Paul, come *into Macedonia and help us*, you ſhall find he ſaith, he went; why? *he went immediately becauſe he was aſſured, that he muſt go*; in the 10. verſe; After that he had ſeen the Viſion *immediately* indeavoured to go into Macedonia aſſuredly *gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the Goſpel to them*; If you will ask any man; How will you know you have a Revelation? I hope Sir, I have it from God; If he ſay ſo, he hopes he *hath it from God*, Ile conclude, it is no ſuch extraordinary Revelation, for if he had had an *extraordinary* Revelation from God, wherein he was infallible, then he had that πληροφορια which here Paul found (at leaſt in a good meaſure) and it would ſo far have diſcovered it ſelf to him, that he ſhould have had a ſtrong *aſſurance that God called him, and he muſt go*; but I remember a ſtory, A man had *knocked down*

Prov. 14. 10. Revel. 2. 17.

Note.

Images

Images out of a window, and then comes, and conſults with a *Divine*, Sir, think you not I had an extraordinary *call to knock down theſe Images*? Do you think it? yes Sir, then I know you had not; for if you had had an *extraordinary call*, then you would have had an aſſurance too *from God*, that he had *called you*; So that if there be an *infallible Revelation*, there is a *certain evidence* goes along with it: hence I conclude, *Many people that talk ſo much of Revelations, have not theſe extraordinary Revelations, becauſe they have not theſe Certainties*; But then there is alſo a Spirit of vviſedome and Revelation that Paul prayes for, for all his Epheſians: in the 1. Epheſians 17. 18. that their eyes might be opened, by the Spirit *of wiſedome and Revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt*, that they may *know the hope of their calling*; but vvhat? theſe are for *our ſelves*, and vvhereas the other *Revelations to publick perſons*, are extraordinary *ones*, and that others may have *diſcoveries*, and others are *to be obliged* to obſerve them; As ſuppoſe I or you, or any particular *Saint* in this *congregation*, vve ſhould go to prayer, and read a Chapter, and it may be have a hint, a beam of light, that vve underſtand this in reading of a Chapter, that vve never ſavv before, though vve reade it an hundred times; *Ile bleſſe God, this is a new light, God comes in to me, and gives me a degree of the Spirit of wiſedome and Revelation:* but vvhat is the difference novv? here is the grand miſtake amongſt many men, and I deſire it may be rightly apprehended, this Revelation I bleſſe God for, may be of good uſe to mee, but *this is no obligeing rule and light for others, as the Apoſtles was when their Revelations were extraordinary*. If you vvill ſay, I have this light, and you muſt follovv my light, here you are miſtaken, unleſſe you are a *publick* perſon, for vvhat is thy revelation here, that light that God is pleaſed to give thee, is for the *ſatisfaction* of thy ſoul, or it may be for thy ovvn *guidance*, but not *oblige and impoſe* upon others, and this is a grand deceit now a dayes, when many an honeſt-hearted Chriſtian, (for ſo I believe many of them are) *very honeſt-hearted*, and have much *communion with God*, and receive many good hints from him in *prayer*, and reading *of the Scriptures*, and attend upon ordinances, if they will make uſe of this to themſelves, vvell and good, (if the Lord proſper them in it,) but if they will come and ſay, *I have had this Revelation, and you muſt believe as I believe, and do as I do*, becauſe *God hath ſhewen me ſuch things*,

Note.

Much difference betwixt Revelations to private Chriſtians, and to publick perſons, ſuch as the Apoſtles.

there (brother) you are mistaken; for God gives thee a Revelation not to propose a new rule, that thou shouldest impose upon others, as he did *to the Apostles* that were persons extraordinarily acted, assisted, and directed, and had a Commission for that purpose; but he gives thee this private discovery for thy own private satisfaction, and advantage, and if thou use it to that purpose, thou hast much cause to rejoyce in it, and blesse God for it.

Object. But it may be you will object and say, But I must make use of such Revelations, (I must name the word, I would to God there were no occasion for it,) as the *Antiscripturists* speak, men that dispute against the Scriptures, and will not allow the Scriptures to be the word of God, and disparage them in comparison of their Revelations; A strange thing, if they consider that place in Peter, they had a Revelation indeed, they had seen and heard a *voyce in the Mount*, in the 2. Peter 1. 19. *We* (saith he) *have a more sure word of Prophesie, whereunto you do well, to take heed*; A more sure word of Prophesie: when he compares a *voice in the mount from heaven*, yet he calls it a more *sure word of prophesie*; *whereunto you do well that ye take heed, as to a light that shineth in a dark place till the day dawn, and the day-starre arise in your hearts*, not as they will expound it, not that you must take heed to the sure word of prophesie, *till Jesus Christ come into your hearts*, and *then throw away the Scriptures*. O most rotten and unsavoury, and (I dare say) an ungodly exposition; but you do well to take heed to those discoveries that are made, *in the prophetical Scriptures, in the old Testament*, there speaking *comparatively*, *untill* Jesus Christ dawn in your hearts, give light, rise, and there gloriously appear,* till there be a more full Gospel-light, for that he speaks of, as you shall see Gerard and some others upon the place; but I must proceed; let me adde this further, you that will say, Revelations must be *our Rule, because the Scriptures are so dark* and you do not understand the translations, you do not know them, and there are such varietie of translations in severall places you cannot tell what to think, to this let me answer; in the first place, and

The Apostle commends them for taking heed to the Scriptures.

* Untill, often in Scripture signifieth a continuation of time, and not onely a period. as Mat. 1. 25. vid. *Gerard.* Comment. on the place.

Quest.

Answ. It is a very good hint that Austin hath, if so be there are two diverse places of Scripture, and wherein there are divers readings; whether the old Coppy, or this Coppy, or that Coppy, be true, we cannot tell: (saith he) but the more the better; this is *Austins answer, the more the better*; the greater variety of readings, and

and a *greater commendation* it is to Scripture, becauſe, though there be ſome vaiety of readings, in regard of particular words, yet you ſhall find all thoſe readings agree in the ſubſtantialls; it is a great commendation now; and (my brethren) *Scripture is not ſo much the words as the ſenſe*, and if the ſenſe be the ſame, as to the *fundament all* points in all places, the multitude of various readings is no diſparagement; for it is rather indeed *a wonder that it is ſo well*, and a marvellous work of providence, that *a Bible running through ſo many hands, writing firſt, and then printing*, and now ſo many hundreds above thouſands of years together, divers thouſands (as you know a great part of the old Teſtament was) that there ſhould be no more *miſtakes*, an admirable work of providence.

But then I will add this further, Many of thoſe *miſtakes that are*, it is an eaſie matter to reconcile them. I confeſſe, it is not very obvious *to all* but learned men that are *Antiquaries, and Criticks*, and are able to conſult *with books*, and have ſeen ancient *Copies, &c.* they are prepared to reconcile; As there is a difference now in *Mark and John* concerning the times there about Chriſts ſuffering, one ſaith the third hour, and another ſaith the ſixth, how ſhall we reconcile them? learned men have ſeen ancient Copies, where they are both the ſame, an ancient Copy of the 19. of John naming the third hour.

Mark 15.25. Third hour. John 19. 14. ſixth hour.

We have a place in the 27 of Matthew 5. where it is ſaid there, as I take it, the Prophet Jeremy, if you pleaſe to turn to the 27. Chapter, or look it at your leaſure; at the 9. verſe then was that fullfilled, that that was ſpoken by *Jeremias the Prophet*: ſome tell us Jeremiah, and Zachary written *contractively* in the Hebrew, *are the ſame*, and ſome ſay among the Hebrews, and others ſay Zachary was *Jeremiahs ſcholar*, and *therefore called by that name*; but here is a ſhort anſwer ſalves all; I can tell a man that hath ſeen a Copy, ſix hundred years old, where there was neither Jeremy nor Zachary in, but *the Prophet*: there is a ſhort and full anſwer.

See *Danſus* and *Junius* his Parallels.

Learned Arch-Biſhop *Uſher.*

There is another place in the 1. Corinthians: (it is very conſiderable) and the 15. there ſaith Paul, *I proteſt by your rejoycing that we die daily*; ſome reade it, *I proteſt by our rejoycings* in the 32. verſe; τὴν ὑμετέραν or τὴν ἡμετέραν καύχησιν, it is not I, or all the learned men, (I dare ſay) in this a ſſembly, or in any other, can poſſibly determine, whether it were to be read *ours*

or

or *yours*: whether *our rejoycing, or your rejoycing*; becauſe they are both a truth; yet I could tell you what is anſwered; learned Criticks give this anſwer, that the ancient Greeks did pronounce the Eta, and the Upſilon much alike, and then when a copie came to be tranſcribed, he that did write did not *look upon the copie*, but heard one dictate and read *to him*, now they did pronounce *Eta like Upſilon*, and ſo the miſtake *might be* eaſie; he that writ, could not well tell whether he ſaid ὑμετέραν or ἡμετέραν, they being alike in the *pronunciation*; and upon this very ground, might be the miſtake, now many ſuch places I might name; *Do not thou decline the word of God, and flie to Revelations*; know thou there is, and do thou carefully *maintain, that ſweet harmony that is between the word of God, and the Spirit of Revelation*; and if the ſame Spirit that did endite the word, do ſpeak in thy mind, and work in thy heart, then indeed thou haſt a great deal of cauſe to rejoyce, and then thou mayeſt ſafely go on; but curſed will they be in their practiſes, that do divide thoſe things, ſeparate them that God hath conjoyned together, *word and ſpirit, do not thou advance Spirit, to the diſparagement* of the word: make uſe of the word in a concurrence with *the light of the Spirit*, and *improve the Spirit for a more full diſcovery of the word*: I much haſten; Leſt I ſhould be exalted, through an abundance of Revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the fleſh; leaſt I ſhould be exalted:

Do not ſeparate word and ſpirit which God hath joyned.

Doct. *The Lord is moſt carefull to ſuppreſſe, to hinder the thriving of his people in any ſinfull courſe*; therefore ſaith he, leſt I ſhould be exalted through the abundance of revelations, he gives him a thorn, leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure, why ſo? will the Lord hinder it thus?

Reſp. He knows that we are *naturally prone to corrupt even the beſt things*; and this the nature of Pride; whereas all *other evills riſe out of evill*, Pride ſprings *out of the aſhes of good*: and whereas we ſhould glorifie God with our good things, we do engroſſe thoſe good things to our own glory, and ſo moſt *ſacrilegiouſly rob God*; The Lord knows this, and therefore in ſuch caſes, will be moſt carefull to hinder us from undoing our ſelves: he loves us ſo dearly; even as a *father loves a child*, if he ſees the *knife*, (though it be a very good thing, and very uſefull) will cut the *childs fingers*, he will take away the knife from the child, though *the child cries* after it: if the *Wife come* to love *the ſervant* once,

better

better then her *Husband*, though he is a moſt uſefull ſervant, an excellent *ſteward*, an *admirable ſecretary*, a very good, and dexterous, and faithfull Bayliffe, yet becauſe he gets into the husbands *place*, and hath that room in his *wives affections*, that is *peculiar to him*, and ſhe begins to be *diſloyall* towards *him*, he will turn his ſervant out of doores, why? becauſe he will not have his Wife to be *undone*, nor ſuffer his *own glory* to be *eclipſed*.

Therefore let us humbly *kiſſe Gods rod, and liſten what language it ſpeaks, and he who hath appointed it*, even when he *ſmites*; know this to your comfort he can ſmile upon us; and when other men think the ſentence *of death* is paſſed upon us, (it may be) he is then *enlightning* of us; when others think he is *marring* and *undoing* of us, he is *making* and *doing us moſt good*, when others think by humbling *providences*, he is blaſting *us*, then he is raiſing *us*, and preparing us for *great mercies*: O how good a God have we! Take us in the very worſt, in the *loweſt* condition of our Chriſtianity, in the *blackeſt*, and *bittereſt part* of it, when we ſuffer, even then God is dealing like a wiſe *Phyſitian*, even giving us *recovering, or preventing Phyſick*; and hence it is that the Apoſtle ſaith, *the God of all grace who hath called you to eternall glory, make you perfect, after you have ſuffered* a while, make you perfect,, ſtrengthen, ſtabliſh, ſettle you: there is no leſſe then four words; as if he ſhould have ſaid, *Never expect, though you be called to eternall glory, never expect that he that is a God of grace ſhould make you perfect, till you have ſuffered a while*; never think thou art undone, though the world ſay thou art *undone*, though God *himſelf afflict thee*, never ſo *ſeverelie, and whip thee* with a ſmarting rod, as here Paul had a *thorn in the fleſh*; becauſe thou haſt to deal with that God that loves thee, more wiſely, better then thou *canſt love thy ſelf*; that knows what is *proper and good* for thee, more then thou *knoweſt what is good for thy ſelf*; he pitties thee, he loves thee, even *as a father pitties his children*; *Nothing more unhappie, then the happineſſe of thoſe that go on in a ſinfull courſe; and the greateſt temptation of all, ſometimes is, to have no temptation*; when God ſhall rather lay the reyns upon our necks, and leave us to our ſelves, it is a ſigne he is angry with us; and when he would undo a man indeed *eternallie*, then gives him up to himſelf, and leaves him to himſelf; in the 81. Pſal. 11. 12. you *would have none of me*, you *would not heare my voice*, I will give you up to your own hearts *luſts*,

Uſe.

Mic. 6. 9.

Medicina ὑγιαινουσὰ θεραπευτική.

1. Pet. 4. 10.

Pſal. 103. 13.

Nihil infelicius felicitate peccantium.

Maxima tentatio nullā habere tentationem.

and walk after your *own counſels*; Self ſhall *take you* and *lead you*, you would not be guided by me; but when God loves a man, then he will nip him, and chide him for his ſinfull courſes.

a σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί. Propriè ſtimulus aut ſpina in carne, ut ſtimulus lateri, Hoſ. 2. 6. φράξω τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτῆς ἐν σκόλοψι. Obſepiam viam tuam ſpinis. Syr. hæth it, Shephaia ſtimulus. Arabs παραδείσῳ elegantiſſimè, percuſſus in ſpinâ ſive ſtimulo in corpore: ut quis invitus confoditur ſtimulo, ſic Paulus; ſive κεφαλαλγίᾳ ut Chyſ. ſive, dolore auriculæ, ut Tertul. ſive carnis & corporis multò gravioribus tormentis, ut Cypr. ſive alio quocunque. Vide corp. ſermon.

b Ἄγγελος σατᾶν, Immiſſus mihi à Satan. Nam ἄγγελος vox tribuitur rebus inanimatis, inquit Grot. vel potiùs malus aliquis ſpiritus à Sataná emiſſus. Sic Chriſtus nominat Angelos Diaboli. Mat. 25. 41. Piſcat.

There was *given me a* a *thorn in the fleſh*, b *the meſſenger of* c *Sathan to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure.*

c שָׂטָן *In genere Adverſarius, dictum de Angelo bono & malo*, Mar. 22. 22. *Perduellis*, ut Rezin. Solom. *non tam propriè Diabolus. Sic Chriſtus nuncupabat Petrum Satan in lingua Syro-Hebræa Chriſto vernacula, Adverſarium non autem Diabolum*, Mat 16. 23.

Doct. *Somtimes it coſts Saints very dear to have ſins prevented:* why?

Reaſ. Becauſe they are ſo deſperately *inclined* unto thoſe *ſins*, and thoſe ſins ſo highly *provoking unto God*, ſo contrary to the method of his proceedings, to his glory, to his Son, and his kingdome, to his Spirits, if they being rooted ſo in theſe things, it muſt coſt them a *whipping*; as it is with a *ſcholler* he may be *ingenuous* and a good *ſcholler*, but if he be *habitually radicated* in ſome wicked courſe, if the maſter loves him he will whip him, and whip him again and again, till he do *reduce* him and *reclaim* him.

What whip was this here that drew bloud from him? a thorn in the fleſh: of this, *Expoſitours* have *ſeverall interpretations*; ſome will have it to be the luſt of *uncleanneſſe*, that is not probable; ſome will have it to be his originall corruption *ſet on by the devill*; that ſeems more probable: but there is a thorn *given in the fleſh*, therefore it muſt be ſomthing *that God gives*; given in the fleſh; the meſſenger of Sathan to buffet me: very learned men reſolve upon this, that Paul was *reproached much* by *the falſe Apoſtles*, he was *diſparaged*, a man of mean *preſence*, (as they conceived) and it may be he had ſome imperfection in his ſpeech, ſomthing or other they did caſt upon him to *cloud* him; and as if he did live upon the *people*, and rob *them of their eſtates*, &c. Now when the *devill* ſhall be let looſe upon him with a new *commiſſion*, O here was a *thorn* indeed! a *thorn* in his ſides indeed; the word is very emphaticall, I cannot ſtay long upon it, now here was that that the falſe *Apoſtles came and buffeted him*;

you

you Paul have *undone the people*, and miſled them, &c. they came as meſſengers of Sathan, and God might give them a commiſſion as he doth to the *devill* and *wicked men*, by way of *holy and wiſe permiſſion*: and this is a thorn in the fleſh, why? in regard of the painfulneſſe and reproachfulneſſe of it.

As you deſire to prevent great and *ſharp afflictions*, watch againſt *great ſins*; and when God doth *great things* for you, take heed you be not guiltie of great *wantonneſſe*, and ſo provoke him to turn your *light* in to *darkneſſe*, your *health* into *ſickneſſe*, your *plenty* into *poverty*, your *peace* into *terrour*; and inſtead of a *ſpirit* of *revelation* and *conſolation*, and thoſe ſweet diſcoveries, and abundance of revelations you had, take heed you provoke not the Lord to ſend a meſſenger of Sathan to buffet you, and to delude your comfort from you, & have a kindof hell in your conſciences. *Uſe.* 2 *Theſ.* 2.

For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, it might depart from me. *Verſ.* 8.

It is the ſpirit of a Saint when he is under affliction, then to *ſeek the Lord, and to ſeek him with importunity*: why? the reaſon is this, *Doct.*

There is a *divine inſtinct*, it is not only a *prudentiall inſtinct* that carries him *towards God*; he knows all his riches lies there, and all his ſtrength is treaſured up in Jeſus Chriſt, he is able to *do nothing without Chriſt*, and therefore he will run to the throne of grace, and there appeal to God in Chriſt, pour out his ſoul, repreſent his deſires, act that excellent place, *Phil.* 4. 6. *In nothing be carefull, but in all things make known your requeſts with thanksgiving*. A Saint that is *indeed taught* of God, doth as naturally move towards heaven in his ſtreights, as a *piece of iron that is touched with a load-ſtone*, towards the North, you cannot *diſſever* them, ſomtimes he may be forced to neglect prayer in a morning, or this time or that time, but it may be it brings him down on his knees, and drives forth tears afterwards, and he is never quiet till he is got to him *center again*, to his *right point*, till he is come to his *wonted communion* with *God*. *Reaſ.* *John* 15. 5. μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε.

O acquaint *your ſelves more and more with the life of faith*, and act that life of *faith in prayer*; for what is prayer but the *breathing of faith*, when the poor ſoul comes and lies at the feet of God, and there *pants* and *breaths* out *earneſt deſires* before him; and know this for your comfort, the Lord not onely delights to beſtow *bleſſings upon his ſervants*, but he *delights to have* fel- *Uſe.*

lowſhip with *his ſervants in prayer.* O that we could eccho back again, and go to the Lord, not only to obtain ſuch *mercies from God* by *praying*, but to enjoy *him in prayer*; this would be *heaven indeed.*

Beſought him thrice, here was his importunity,

Doct. *A praying Saint that is acquainted with God, will not be ſatisfied till he hears from God*; he knows there is an holy violence in importunate Prayers which is well pleaſing: It is good to beſiege heaven with ſuch an importunity, as riſes up to an holy impudence, it is moſt acceptable to him; who *deſires to ſee the face and hear the voice of his beloved.*

Luk.11.8. Cant.2.14.

Uſe. Let us be much in prayer; O pray *importunately*, not *ſluggiſhly*, not *lazily*, not *formally*; (the Lord humble us for ſuch defects, ſuch omiſſion, ſuch commiſſion, ſuch defilements of our holy duties;) remember that woman of Canaan, how ſhe prayed in the 15. of Matthew: *Son of David, have mercy upon me, my daughter is grievouſly vexed with a Devil*, and when they would have ſent her away, O ſtill ſhe prayed; when Chriſt gave her a diſcouraging anſwer, ſhe will not take it, ſhe had learned to diſtinguiſh between delayes and denials; and at laſt, when that Jeſus Chriſt (you ſhall find in the place) ſaith this to her, *the Son of man was not ſent, but to the loſt ſheep of Iſrael; we muſt not give childrens bread to dogs:* Lord, if I may not have a childs portion, yet let me have a dogs portion, let me have ſome crums of mercy, let me pick up ſome thing from under thy table, ſomething that falls from thee; *O woman great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* Here is a great deal of faith appears in importunity; and you ſhall find, as I remember, in the 5. of Luke; (I am ſure it is in Luke) there they were ſo importunate; when ſuch an one was ſick, and troubled, they would *untile the houſe*, and let *down his bodie*; that Jeſus Chriſt might cure him, and heal him; here was importunity.

Luk.18.1,2,3 4, 5,&c.

Mat.15.28. A praying Saint may have what he will. Joh. 15. 7. Luk.5.18,19.

It is ſaid of King Edward the ſixth, that good Joſiah; when he that taught him, Sir Jn°. Cheek, *a man of great account in his time, a very learned man was ſick, he went to viſit him, and told him, ſaith he, Come, be not diſcouraged, I have been begging you of God, and he hath aſſured me you ſhall not die of this ſickneſſe, and it proved ſo*; here was an admirable copie of a young King.

There was another before him, *Elfredus*, King of *England* too, much

much (it ſeems) in *prayer*: He divided the 24. hours into three parts; one eight houres he allowed for his ordinary *repaſt, refreſhing*, and *ſleeping*; another eight houres for *publick negotiations*, and affairs of the Kingdome; and a third, for *reading and praying*; this was admirable in thoſe dark times. v. *Faſcicul. Temporum. Elphredus R. Angl. vir totus virtuoſus, octo horas in orando, legendo, & ſcribendo expendit, octo in negotiis regni, octo in cura corporis.*

I have read almoſt the ſame of M. *Eſtie* a learned and godly Miniſter, ſomtimes Fellow of Caius Colledge.

And ſo I might have told you of King *Edward* the ſixth, that when he was *crowned*, they put then *one ſword into one hand*, and another into another, one for *England*, and another for *Ireland*; ſaith he, there muſt be a *third ſword*, or elſe all will not do, and that muſt be the *word of God*, the *ſword of the Spirit*, that muſt teach me what to do; O what *copies* were here from a Kings;

Regis ad exemplum totus componitur Orbis.

I wiſh the *example of ſo great* a perſon may have a great *influence* upon you.

For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me; and he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee.

God hath many wayes of anſwering our prayers: Firſt, His Attributes, his Providence, his Promiſe, his Son interceeding in heaven, are all engaged to make good what his Spirit breaks forth in us, ſo that importunate prayer ſhall not miſcarry; *Doct.*

Why? God will *never be behind hand*, but rather *before hand* with his ſervants; when they are a *praying people*, he will be a God *hearing praiers*; and therefore upon that ground *encouraged* them, to come and *pray, O thou that art a God hearing prayers*; it is his continuall *work*; ſo the word in the Originall wil bear; *to thee ſhall all fleſh come:* An admirable place. *Pſalme* 90. 14, 15, 16. *Reaſ.* Pſal. 65. 2.

Doth God alwayes anſwer his peoples prayers? *Queſt.*

Yes, ſome way or other. *Anſw.*

1 Sometimes in the very *particular mercy*; as to Hannah in Samuel. 1 Sam. 1. 20. 27.

2 Sometimes by *the commutation of a greater good*; As a child would fain have ſuch a knife, no, you ſhall not have it, but you ſhall have a better thing, and it may be the Mother *will give* it a piece of *gold*, that is better. Thus he doth anſwer prayers by way *Eminency*; a high degree. God hath many wayes of anſwering his childrens prayers. *Per commutationem majoris boni.* Zanch.

3 Though he doth not give the thing *we deſire*, yet he gives us

hearts to be *content without* it; it may be God denies you children you beg for children, God will not give you *children*, but he gives you hearts to be *calm and patient without such a blessing*: there is an admirable mercy, and possibly (as to thee) as the *thing desired* as great a *mercy*; according to that *hint* in *Phil*. 4.v.5. *In nothing be carefull*: let your requests be made known to God with thanksgiving, what followes? the peace of God, which passes understanding, shall *guard your hearts*. God (it may be) will not give you the thing, but you shall have a sweet *serenitie*, and *calmnesse of spirit*, which is as sweet; and so it is with many thousands of souls, it may be you have experience of it, when you come from Prayer, you shall *not alwayes* have the thing you desired, but God hath given thee a sweet perswasion of soul to rest fiducially, to *commit thy self to him*.

φρουρήσει.

It may be, as Pauls case here, God will answer your prayers, by giving you the ground *of your prayers*. *Moses* would have seen the land of *Canaan*, by going into it; he shall not go thither, but God will before he *dies*, carry him up to Mount *Nebo*, and thence he shall see it, before he *dies*; there is the *ground* of his prayer *granted*. So you *desire health*, that you may honour *God thereby*: It may be God will give not thee health, but he will enable thee to glorifie him by *faith and patience under sicknesse*: here are thy *praiers answered*, because thou hast the *ground and end of thy prayers*: Paul saith here, *Lord let this thorn be taken from me*; saith God, *my grace is sufficient for thee*; it shall not be taken away but in effect, virtually *interpretativè*, as to him, it shall *equivalentlie*; *my grace is sufficient for thee*; though I take not away thy enemy, yet I will give thee a buckler, and then all will be well; O what saith Paul? would you and I were able to end this discourse, with Pauls words and Pauls Spirit.

Verse 9. *Most gladlie therefore* (saith he) *will I rather glorie in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

Doct. *The spirit of a Saint inclines him to glory in that which glorifies Christ, theugh he himself be debased.*

Hence Paul here glories in his infirmities, and takes *pleasure in them*, that Christs *strength may approve in his weaknesse*, and that the power of Christ ἐπισκηνώσῃ, may *dwell* upon him, and compose him *about as a Tent* doth, and therefore will be visible to the honour of Christ.

Verse 10. *Habitare hoc [illegible] fre[illegible] se ostendere, sicut homines sæpius domi sunt quàm extra domum.* Grot.

What

What is it properly to Glory? 1. *Queſt.*

It imports three things. 1. To *rejoyce* in a thing, 2. To expreſſe *that joy* outwardly. 3. And that with a degree of *exaltation* and *boaſting*: As Jer. 9. 23, 24. *Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdome, nor the rich man in his riches*, &c. *Anſw.*

Why ſo much deſired by Paul that the power of Chriſt may *dwell upon him*; though with his own abaſement? 2. *Queſt.*

The glorious diſcovery of his power, of his powerfull grace is very deſireable: hence he prayes, that the *ſpirit of Revelation would open their eyes* to ſee the *exceeding greatneſſe of his power in believers*, and 2. Theſſ. 1. 11. he prayes that God would *fulfill all the good pleaſure of his goodneſſe, and the work of faith with power*; Chriſt is much *magnified* when his power is much diſplayed. *Anſw.* Eph. 1. 17, 18, 19.

Is it thus? what is it the Lords pleaſure I ſhould undergo this thorn, and is the Lord withall ſo gracious to ſay, *My grace is ſufficient for thee*, and thou ſhalt have that to *ſupport thee*? Let us wiſely apply this Scripture when we are thus abaſed; there was the greateſt perſon in England in her time, (I ſpeak it not with any reflection) that ſaid thus to one of *her Favourites*, when he was deſiring ſuch and ſuch a thing: *My grace is ſufficient for thee*; what ground there was for any mortall creature, though the greateſt of *Kings, or Queens* to applie, or make good theſe words, I know not unto man, but I am ſure God *can, and doth, and will do it unto his children*; therefore let us reſt upon him; and whatever we undergo, ſay, Moſt *gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities*, that the power *of Chriſt may reſt upon me*; here is a ſpirit of a *Paul indeed*, a moſt ſaintlike *ſpirit*, *the very ſpirit of a man that had been in heaven*; that had the higheſt *pitch of Communion with God, and influence from God, and impreſſion of Gods Spirit upon his heart*: moſt gladly therefore will I glory in *my infirmities*, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me; ſometimes he ſaith, in the 6. Galathians 14, *God forbid, I ſhould glory in anything but in Chriſt, and him crucified*; but this is very conſiſtent, he therefore glories *in his infirmities*, in *reference to Chriſt*, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon him, he can be content to be *any thing*, or worſe *then nothing*; and not glory in thoſe *multitudes of Revelations and diſcoveries* that are made to him, but he will be content to glory in his reproches, neceſſities, that the *power of Chriſt may dwell there*; Let my weakneſſe appear, *Uſe.*

ſo

Quo magis adverſis premor, eo majora Deus per me operatur. Grot.

ſo Chriſts ſtrength may appear, for he ſaith afterwards; when *I am weake I am ſtrong*, *when I am* moſt weak in my ſelf, then Jeſus Chriſt is moſt ſtrong, when I am moſt *debaſed in my ſelf*, Jeſus Chriſt is then *moſt exalted in my ſoul*; and thus Paul when he was in a ſtrait, which would be no ſtrait to you or me, or moſt in the world, whether he ſhould live or die, I am in a great ſtrait ſaith Paul, I had *rather for my ſelf, be diſſolved, and be with Chriſt*, that I may enjoy him, but for you, I had rather be debarred of thoſe joyes for a while; O here is a man that is kindly *humbled*; and moſt *ingenionſlie affected* towards Chriſt (the Lord if it be his will, out of the rich treaſure of his grace, vouchſafe the ſame mercy to you and me) that at leaſt we may look, *and reach, and labour to climbe*, and creep by degrees, after this, that we may ſo farre *love Jeſus Chriſt* better *then our ſelves*, that we would not onely glory *in the Revelations* we have, and the mercies we have, and the parts *we have, and the ſucceſſe*, and acceptance; (theſe are plauſible and comfortable things) but if we ſhould be kept low, if God ſhould viſit us *with humbling providences*, if God ſhould eclipſe our *Credit*, or ſuffer us to be *diſpar aged*, that we might ſay, heartily, O Lord, I therefore *will glorie in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me*; The Lord raiſe us to ſuch an Heroicall frame of ſpirit. I end all as Cyrill concludes his preface, *Meum eſt docere, Veſtrum eſt auſcultare, Dei eſt perficere.*

Phil. 1. 21.

FINIS.

UMI